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Vietnam: The Communists are using the lull in the Paris talks to step up propaganda pressure on Saigon and build the image of the Liberation Front as an independent authority in South Vietnam.

On 26 December the North Vietnamese and Liberation Front delegations in Paris issued a joint statement blaming Saigon for the delay in the opening of the talks and again warning that little progress of any kind can be expected at Paris as long as the Thieu government represents South Vietnam.

This theme has been pushed in Communist propaganda for several weeks now; it usually takes the form of a call for the overthrow of the Thieu government and its replacement by a new "peace cabinet." The outlines of such a cabinet are left deliberately vague, but the Communists say that it must be one which will send representatives to Paris to meet with Liberation Front officials to work out a political solution to end the war.

The new communiqué portrayed the Communist position on current procedural problems as exceptionally reasonable. The Communists offered to meet at a round table and hinted that if this were accepted by the allies there would be few other procedural difficulties. In the meantime the Communists continued to publicize their direct exchange with US authorities over the prisoner issue and the meeting on 26 December between French Foreign Minister Debre and the head of the Liberation Front delegation in Paris as examples of the political independence and authority of the Liberation Front.

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Japan: Strife on university campuses spearheaded by ultraleftist students confronts the government with a deepening crisis.

Radical factions of the Sengakuren, a leftist student confederation, view the struggle with university authorities over educational policies and administration as only a preliminary skirmish in the battle with the Japanese "establishment," their main target. In provoking disorders on the campus, the radical students are also testing tactics for their planned campaign of violence against the US-Japan security treaty. This campaign is expected to peak in 1970.

Students are currently disrupting normal operations in some 50 schools throughout the country, including Tokyo University, Japan's most prestigious institute of higher learning. Mounting public concern stems not only from the breakdown of order on campus but also from the very real threat to students' careers posed by the possible closure of several universities.

Although one university in Tokyo has announced a recess of six months for a "cooling-off period," most school authorities hesitate to make this admission of defeat. They are also reluctant to call on the police to eject radical students, fearing that such a move would only intensify and prolong campus violence.

Despite the growing dimensions of the crisis, the government has thus far failed to come up with any solution to the school problem. Meanwhile, increasing public criticism of the government's inaction could develop into a damaging major political issue for Prime Minister Sato.

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UN-Africa: The Security Council is expected to consider the South-West Africa question again early in 1969, possibly in January.

Moderate African states have reacted in a generally favorable manner to a recent speech in the UN in which the US took a relatively tough stance against the position of South Africa. They have expressed the hope that the US is now willing to take more significant steps toward removing South Africa from South-West Africa.

Moderate states in the Afro-Asian bloc increased their influence at the last UN General Assembly session, and favor additional consultations with the US on colonial issues. They want to induce the US to make more active representations to Portugal regarding its territories in Africa. The US abstained on this year's resolution, which had the backing of the moderates. The resolution draws the Security Council's attention to the "grave situation" in Portuguese territories and appeals to all nations--particularly NATO members--to withhold military assistance to Portugal. [REDACTED]

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NOTE

Italy-NPT: Rome intends to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty soon, possibly within the next few weeks. Foreign Minister Nenni has told the US ambassador that, despite the invasion of Czechoslovakia, matters as important as the signature of the treaty should not be delayed indefinitely. The Italians will make it clear to Moscow, however, that relations cannot be completely normal until Soviet troops leave Czechoslovakia.



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